A REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH NATION

Saturday, October 7. 1710

A Word or two more about our Elections —— Treating, Bribing, Drinking, and all the Corruptions of a Debauch'd Principle, have been our fore-runners ——— By these our Elections are made; by these, O ye Freeholders and Electors of *England*, an Interest has been made in your Favour ——— Your Votes are bought with Liquor, your Birthright bespoke of you, in Consideration of what you receive ——— What? Not a Mess of Pottage? *Esau* made a good Bargain, compar'd to the People of this Generation; he, prompted by his Hunger, and at the point of Fainting, Tempted by his Craving Appetite, and blind to the Blessing of his Primogeniture ——— Took the present Bait, and let go the Future Advantage.

But *Englishmen!* sordid and forsaken, Abandon'd of their Reason, urg'd by no Necessity, and prompted by no Appetite, for here the Apetite is prompted by the Art, under no manner of Temptation, but upon meer steps of Brutality, and the most absurd Folly in the World, Sell their All, their Laws, their Properties, their Posterity, their Souls, and their God; and all for What? ——Not for a Bait to Nature, a Meal's Meat, a Restoring in Excess of want, *which was Esau's Excuse* ——— But unsufferable Brutes! for an Infection, for the Plague

Plague, for the worſt and moſt loathſome Contagion ——— That they may gorge their Spleen, forfeit Nature with Vice, and be made worſe than the Brutes —— That ſell their Liberty, for a Doſe of Poyſon, and Purchaſe Bondage with the Price of their very Souls.

Is this the Practice of Rational Creatures? ——— *What Sots are we thus Write?* To think that Men carry'd this length, can be mov'd with Argument; will Words affect thoſe who have ſold their Reaſon, gag'd their Underſtanding, and given themſelves up to all that's ſtupid? ——— Should our Fathers that Fought for Liberty, that died in the Field to preſerve to us, the unbroken Conſtitution we ſtand upon ——— Should they riſe and look in our Faces, how would they reproach us, with putting no Value on the Blood of our Anceſtors, and betraying our Innocent Poſterity? How would they bluſh to own us for their Race, and brand us for a People unworthy to have any Priviledges, but that of Slavery entruſted to us? ——— And could we riſe again from our Graves, to Viſit our Succeſſors in this Iſland, what a Hell would it be to us, to hear our Captivated Children Reproaching their Fathers who ſold their Liberty, and left them in Bondage? To hear our Children Reviling their Treacherous Anceſtors, that betray'd them to Slavery, and that being left free, and Bleſſed with unvaluable Liberty, had no Concern upon us to hand it down to them?

And all this given up for a Draught of Surfeiting, Luſcious, Deceit, the Cheat of Wine, the Belch of the Brewhouſe, that Men in their Senſes ſhun like a Peſtilence, and loſe their Senſes when they take it — What Poportion, wretched Countryman, What Compariſon is there between making your Sons Slaves, your Daughters Proſtitutes, your ſelves accurſed to the Tenth Generation ——— and an Hours Gorging your Appetite, with the Pleaſure of being Sick to Death? ——— Where's the Equivalent to the loſs? What do the Orators pretend to offer you?

Drink! Horrid Satisfaction, a Draught of God's Vengeance! for the Sin carries the Puniſhment with it ——— DRINK, that the Senſes being doz'd, you may be capable of giving up Liberty to *French* Bondage, Property to Rapacious Tyranny, Chaſtity to Tyrannick Luſt, Religion to Idolatry, your Nation to God's Enemies, and your Soul to the Devil: What has Drink to do in Electing Parliament Men? What has Gluttony and a Vomiting Stomach to do with Electing Legiſlators, whoſe Buſines it is, to Condemn the Crime that Votes for them? ——— Unaccountable Stupidity! —— Drink to make Parliament Men, be Drunk to make you ſedate, blind your Reaſon to make you Judge of Members, ſtupifie your Senſes to quicken your Underſtanding, doze your Head to open your Eyes!

Wretched *Engliſhmen!* I ſcorn to ſay *Britains*, for *Scotland* has more Modeſty: Let me ſpeak to the poor Fooliſh and impos'd upon Electors; Honeſt Freeholder, you are come to chooſe Parliament Men here —— Why do they give you Wine? Why treat you at Inns? Why ſet out Barrels of Beer for you? —— Why do they prompt you to Drink, and if poſſible to Exceſs — Is it that being Drunk, you ſhall know better who to Chooſe, or worſe? ——— Is it that when your Heads are Muddl'd, you ſhould judge better of the Qualifications neceſſary to a Repreſentative, or worſe? Is it that the Liquor will quicken and ſharpen your Underſtanding, or darken and doze it? Is it that you may let your Vote go with your Inclination, or againſt it? Is it leaving you to a free Choice, or putting a Conſtraint upon you? Is it to open your Eyes, or blind you; To undeceive, or to delude you?

Were there no danger, that in your Senſes you would find cauſe to be of another Opinion —— That if your Eyes were open, you would ſee too clear; that your Head being free, you would make another Judgment —— No Man would be ſo fooliſh as to offer you Liquor at an Election —— Mark the difference between the Honeſt Candidate, and the Knave —— Says the firſt, keep them ſober, keep them from the Ale, keep their Heads free, I'll warrant they

they are mine while they are in their Senſes; but if the other Side gets them, and makes them Drunk, I know not what they may do——— Take the other Side, keep them Warm, ply them well with the Glaſs, don't leave them when they are got Drunk, they will all Vote for me; but if you let them ſleep, if they come to think and look about them, they are loſt.

I appeal to the General Knowledge and Practice of *England*, if this be not the Caſe; and what can you ſay for your ſelves, that will be made Drunk at an Election, only for the Satisfaction of ſaying you do you know not what? What can you ſay for your ſelves, that if you were at Play at your Cards for but 6 pence, you will be ſo careful one of another if a Man be Drunk you won't let *him* play, you will ſay, it is not fair to win his Money, for the Man does not know what he does —— And here you play away your Wives and Children, your Eſtates, your Religion, and your Poſterity, and all, when you know not what you do.

We eſteem it one of the groſſeſt pieces of Villany, for a Man to make another Man Drunk, and then get him to play —— This Entitles the People that practiſe it, to the Title of Sharpers and Setters, and Mankind expreſs a general Averſion to them upon all occaſions —— How often has the County of *Surry* thrown out a certain Gentleman, purely upon the Occaſion of his ruining an Honeſt Family that Way —— And carried the Box and Dice into the Field, as a Reproach and a mark of Infamy againſt the Perſon, on the Day of an Election?

What then ought the *Engliſh* Freeholder to think of him, that comes to offer him Drink, in order to pre-engage or Byaſs his Vote in an Election? He ought to eſteem him a Sharper, that having a Deſign to trick him, attempts by the help of Liquor to put him out of the Government of himſelf ——Not doubting but then he will play away Eſtate, Liberty, Wife, Children and Religion, at one Caſt.

What leſs is it—— than this; when the Freeholders Senſes are Invaded with Subtilty and Management, and they drawn in to Drink away their Underſtanding, that the Tongue not knowing what it ſays, or the Hand not knowing what it does, may Curſe his Country, and Murther his own Priviledges ——— And by following the Trayterous Hand, that ſtands ready to lead him, may Ingulph himſelf and his Country in the worſt kind of Deſtruction?

What would you ſay of a Miniſter coming Drunk into the Pulpit, or a Communicant coming Drunk to the Sacrament? Would it not fill you with Abhorrence, with Deteſtation, and Averſion, both to the Man, and the Crime—— In it's Proportion 'tis juſt the ſame; an Election is the Solemneſt, Civil Act, that any common Man is capable to do —— And will you diveſt your ſelves of your Underſtanding, to Qualify you for it?

Wretched Advocates for the Church are they, that firſt make the Poor Freeholders Drunk, then put the Church into their Mouths, and tell them they Vote for the Church——— The Church of *England* abhors the practice, and contemns the being ſerv'd by her Servants, at the Price of their Souls—— The Church of *England* deſires no ſuch Aſſiſtance; it is Men in their Senſes with their Eyes open, and their Heads clear, that muſt preſerve the Church of *England*: Her Caſe would be very deplorable, if it were neceſſary to blind the People, deprive them of their Reaſon, and Debauch their Underſtandings, to make them capable of ſerving her ——— The Church is moſt the Cry of thoſe that underſtand her Intereſt leaſt; but ſure Sobriety, Temper, Vertue, and Religion, muſt be-friend the Church; woe to her, when her Safety conſiſts in the Deluſion and Debauching of her People!

Methinks this is ſo evident, that like a Man that offers Beaſtiality to you, it ſhould create an Indignation and Abhorrence, both of the Fact and the Perſon—— That as of the Devil, Tempting to a groſs unnatural Crime, your Blood ſhould riſe at the Sin, and at the Tempter, and it ſhould be fatal for any Man to offer it.

To

To give a Freeholder Wine, when he is going to Elect, is like giving Children Drink when they are hot, throwing the Bedcloaths off a Man in a Sweat, or letting Blood in a Feavour——— You had as good thrust a Knife into them; and would our Freeholders but esteem it so, no Man would dare to make the offer.

'Tis hard, that once in three Year this Nation should be carried to the very brink of Destruction, meerly by the most sordid, unaccountable, unnatural Folly in the World; that all our Priviledges, Liberties, Religion, and the Blood of our Ancestors, should turn upon the Cast of a Dice, *as we may say*, upon the Question, whether your Electors shall be Drunk or Sober.

God Almighty, that has so often sav'd us against our Will, Shield us from being sold by a Draught of Beer, and from the Dreadful Judgment of National Drunkenness.

Were the Money now spent to Debauch our Freeholders, and Byas our Voices, to draw us in to Choose Scoundrels for Members of Parliament, and Debauchees for Legislators; were it Tax'd upon the Estates of the present struggling Parties, what an Outcry of Oppression would here be? But Glorious would the Justice of it be, that as the King of *Poland* made the City of *Dantzick* Pay 600000 Dollars to him, because they had Paid so much before to his Enemy; so the Parliament should cause an Enquiry to be made, of the Expence of these Treating, Drunken Elections, and Tax the Gentlemen just as much Money towards the Expence of the War, to save their Country, as they have Expended, in endeavouring to Ruin it.

I have nothing to do with Parties, New or Old Ministry, *Whig* or *Tory*, in this —— I wish we could Judge *of the Parties Choosing*, a little better; that they would once come to despise the Corruptions, and Drunken Baits of the Candidates, and with clear Heads, calm Thoughts, and unbyas'd Judgments, learn to Vote for such Men, as their own uncorrupted Consciences shall tell them are Qualify'd to serve their Country, and protect her Liberty.

And how should this be done, under the Debauchery of a Reeling Head, and a Staggering Understanding? Why, *O English men!* will ye give up you selves?——— Why will you Choose a Parliament that shall be not a Parliament of the People, but of a Party? —— Why will ye provoke Heaven, *who has hitherto bless'd you with Liberty*, to think you unworthy of them, and give you up to be destroy'd by your selves? *I am no Prophet*, nor the Son *of a Prophet*——But am press'd in my Thoughts to tell you, That if this Abominable Practice of Selling the Votes of our Freeholders for Drunkenness and Excess, be not speedily and effectually prevented and suppress'd——— *God will*, in Judgment to us all, *either take away their Priviledges from this Generation, OR, take away this Generation from their Priviledges.*

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